5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 MI Middle East
Bedouin M34

where wells are somewhat close together and the for-
age of the country allows it, goats can be kept, but these
must be watered at least once a day. They furnish hair
for tent-cloth, and thus it is the goat that shelters the
Bedouin from the elements. In districts where forage
and water are still more abundant, sheep are raised,
chiefly for their wool or as articles of export. Mutton is
the favorite meat all over Arabia, and although for a les-
ser occasion goats or camels may answer, when a great
sheikh gives a feast, sheep are the animals slaughtered.

Much has been written, and justly, about the beauty
and the endurance of Arabian horses, but they are not an
economic asset. In Central Arabia a horse is a pure lux-
ury. Often in summer they must live on camel's milk
just as humans do. They are kept and treated as house-
hold pets and are very intelligent and affectionate. Their
only function is to furnish an aristocratic mount for
pleasure, for state occasions and for war. During part
of the year there is abundant pasturage for them, but
they are a luxury afforded only by the sheikhs and the
very rich and their number is small.

There are years in Arabia when the spring rains fail
partially or completely, and then the animals die by thou-
sands, or are driven to the nearest town to be sold for a
song. In such years starvation stalks abroad through the
land. Little children die because there is no food suit-
able for such tender stomachs, and the adults are even
more gaunt and thin than usual. The sheikhs are nearly
bankrupted by the number of poor they have to feed,
and the whole community waits and prays for more rain
the coming spring.

At the best the life of a desert Bedouin is one of a
poverty so bitter and deep that Westerners have little idea
of it. The entire outfit of a family could be bought for a
mere trifle.

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which I was glad not to understand, but one of the Bedouin youngsters who were with us flared back at the townsman with remarks that reduced him immediately to unconditional surrender. Every noon and every night the boy took her some of our rice and bread, and she accompanied this men's caravan, entirely alone, till we arrived in the city. I remember that same boy's earnest and simple cordiality as he congratulated one of his warm friends on her recent marriage. "May God increase your prosperity, your camels and your children."

It is interesting to observe the fundamental economic conceptions in a community as primitive as that of the desert. Contracts are sacred in Arabia, as in the West. The guest and his host are bound by a contract the terms of which are perfectly understood by both parties and are practically never violated. Many of these Bedouins enter into contracts to dive at the opening of the diving season in Bahrein, and one never hears of such a contract being broken. There is little occasion for the making of contracts in the desert, but even at the price of personal loss, a contract entered into in good faith must be carried out.

The Bedouin's conception of property, however, differs from ours considerably. To say that it is communistic is to exaggerate, but there is certainly a stronge tinge of communism about it. Property, that is to say what the earth affords in the way of food, shelter and clothes, is of value because it sustains human life. The food, the clothes and the houses that the Bedouin's world can produce, are never enough to go around. He considers them valuable simply as they minister to human need. In the cases property comes to be regarded as sacred, much as it is in the West. Beautiful houses are admired and

21: Fisher S-4 (no date) 1950 M1 Middle East M1
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the group. Yet although tribal solidarity and discipline are conspicuous features, it has been the weakness of Badawin society throughout the ages that political combinations larger than the tribe have been achieved merely for a very short time. An outstanding leader has brought together a number of tribes into one larger unit, but union has proved temporary; and more often than not on the death of the leader, his organisation has dissolved again into smaller groups. Large-scale political organisation is therefore not a feature of Badawin society, and resulting inter-tribal feuds, inveterate warfare, political instability and inconstancy have had an effect not merely on desert and steppe life, but also on that of the settled lands of the arid borders. It is also possible to see why, in the absence of strong internal political organisation, so much of the Middle East has in the past fallen under the control of outside powers.

To each tribe belong certain rights of pasture and occupation. The limits of each tribal territory are carefully defined, and generally comprise a summer and a winter camping ground. Exact size of territory usually has a certain relation to the physical force and prestige commanded by each tribe, and limits therefore vary from one period to another. Weaker tribes seek 'protection' from a larger.

As a sample of tribal division, the distribution of Badawin in Syria is given below. It should be noted that in certain instances tribal territories cross international frontiers, and thus there arise special problems of administration. Agreements have been concluded between the governments concerned, whereby nomads in effect assume temporarily the nationality of the country in which they find themselves.

Because of the necessity for constant movement, the material culture of the Badawin is poor. Chief possession of the tribesman, after his animals, is a tent, usually black, and woven of camel or goat hair. When in good repair, these tents are quite waterproof—sufficient to withstand the infrequent, but severe downpours which occur—and the size of the tent, shown by the number of tent poles used, is an indication of the affluence and social standing of the owner. The interior is divided, on the right for men, and on the left for women. One side away from the wind is usually left open, with a coffee hearth in front. The coffee hearth is the social centre of the household; and the head of the family, although leaving the entire preparation of food to his womenfolk, will himself undertake the preparation and serving of coffee. True Bedu coffee is strong, devoid of milk or sugar, but

I: Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

to, and the type may be called, for lack of a better description, Badawin in the transition stage to a more settled existence.

These 'Arabdar, certainly in Kuwait, usually have large flocks of sheep, and only a few camels to give them milk and move their tents as they follow the grazing. Many of them are of good Sharif stock such as 'Ajman, Mutair, 'Utaiba and Harb 'Arabdar; and their members go and come from the towns to their original tribes, and regularly intermarry with their desert cousins.

The good 'Arabdawi is not necessarily looked down upon by the pure Badawin, especially if he is of good stock, but the latter undoubtedly think him rather a soft sort of semi-townsman, who has grown rich in the service of a town ruler, and prefers the fleshpots of *hadhar* life to the real hardships of the desert. They, the 'Arabdawi, are in short a sort of half-Badawin, to be made use of by the pure-bred article, when the latter comes up to town to purchase his needs. The Arabdawi is also a useful go-between in business transactions involving sheep and camels, and at all times is rather proud to act as host and put up his Badawin brother who asks for a night's lodging in the city.

Akaluna al Badu, is a common cry heard among the 'Arabdawis of Kuwait, yet they get prestige and honour among their neighbours, whenever they put up these desert cousins, especially their shaikhs. These half-Badawin 'Arabdar are generally peaceful, for war does not pay them. As their wealth lies in their sheep rather than in their camels, there is no inducement for them to raid, and lift other people's camels, the temptation *par excellence* of the Badawin raider, who is himself so vulnerable. Nevertheless, the 'Arabdawi is an excellent fighting man if it comes to supporting his shaikh or defending the town he depends on.

There is yet another desert dweller who must not be confused with either the pure Badawin nomad, or his 'Arabdar cousin. This is the tribal desert shepherd, whose job in life is to care for the sheep either of the town dwellers or of the more well-to-do tribal shaikhs. As sheep cannot keep pace with camel migrations, and the areas in which they can graze are much more circumscribed or narrowly defined than those wandered over by the camel tribes, a class of shepherds has evolved, who move in areas of their own, but who are allied to